

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A polishing apparatus for performing a polishing operation comprising:

a polishing plate provided with an abrasive cloth;

a chuck for holding a polishing target material to bring the polishing target material into contact with the abrasive cloth;

a head body fixed to a rotary drive shaft, for holding and rotatably driving the chuck;

and a retainer ring supported by the head body in a periphery of the chuck, the polishing target material being polished by the abrasive cloth by a relative motion of the polishing plate and the chuck,

characterized in that the polishing apparatus includes:

supporting means for supporting the retainer ring and the chuck respectively to the head main body so that the retainer ring and the chuck can be moved in a direction of the rotary drive shaft and in a vertical direction independently from each other; and

~~gap securing means for maintaining a gap between the retainer ring and the chuck in a direction perpendicular to the rotary drive shaft, within a predetermined range.~~

means for restricting movements of the retainer ring and the chuck so as to maintain a fluctuation of a gap between the retainer ring and the chuck within a predetermined range during the polishing operation.

2. (previously amended) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the retainer ring is movable in the vertical direction with respect to the chuck.

3. (original) The polishing apparatus according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that one or a plurality of clearances to facilitate the oscillation are provided.

4. (cancelled)

5. (currently amended) The polishing apparatus according to ~~any of~~ claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the range of the gap is between 0.5mm and 2.0mm.

6. (previously amended) The polishing apparatus according to claim 5, characterized in that the distance between the center of the chuck and the center of the polishing target material is no more than 0.5mm.

7. (currently amended) The polishing apparatus according to ~~any of~~ claims 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6, characterized in that the retainer ring is rotatable with respect to the chuck.

Claims 8-10 (cancelled)